

a clever skill in formulating her results, a fine balance in organizing the material, as well as a refined sense of selecting it. Her understanding of the trends in contemporary music is worthy of respect. She is conscious of the wider context of events, interactions, movements and orientations in 20<sup>th</sup> century music. By way of conclusion, the book *Clouds and Sounds of Contemporary Music* is a distinguished and valuable contribution to contemporary European and American music research, concisely and expertly written, in a pleasant and delicate language. It forms a synthesis of the author's professionalism.

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**Vidosava Golubović, Irina Subotić, ZENIT:  
1921–1926, Belgrade, 2008**

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182-0; 532 pages; summaries in English)**

In the histories of various cultural systems there are 'blind spots' whose existence unfolds outside of our field of sight or is, at best, disjointed, fragmentary, in the way that produces much greater myth and prejudice than any universalistic discourse could do. *Zenit* – the idea of aesthetic re-evaluation of old values by means of notional constructs on Europe and Balkans, promoted for the most part during the 1920's through magazines, public performances, lectures, soirées, matinées, collections, publishing – is one such phenom-

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enon which appeared in the circumstances of the ending of the First World War and the forming of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and was based on the inter-media and inter-genre research of literature, typography, graphical solutions, art, film, photography, architecture, music. The ensuing deliberations and interpretations have mostly divided: one focal point has been the literary work, recognized as the dominant discipline, and the other have been the visual arts (mostly graphical solutions and collections, and to a lesser extent photography and architecture).

Considering the latter group of interpretations, *Zenit*, within the body of Yugoslav, national or world historiographies has almost always been analyzed in the broader contexts of Yugoslav art,<sup>2</sup> Serbian art,<sup>3</sup> history of Central-European/European avant-garde,<sup>4</sup> or general art history.<sup>5</sup> Also, there are a respectable number of papers dealing either with *Zenit* as a whole, its aspects or the individuals gathered around the idea. The first comprehensive attempt at integrating and exposing the diverse and ample material, hence at approaching *Zenit* as an interdisciplinary practice and an avant-garde movement in the full sense, took place in 1983, when Vidosava Golubović and

<sup>2</sup> M. B. Protić, *Treća decenija: konstruktivno slikarstvo* [*The Third Decade: Constructivist Painting*], Belgrade, 1964; D. Đurić, M. Šuvaković (eds.), *The Impossible Histories*, Cambridge Mass. and London, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> M. B. Protić, *Srpsko slikarstvo XX veka* [*Serbian Painting of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*], Belgrade, 1970; L. Trifunović, *Srpsko slikarstvo 1900–1950* [*Serbian Painting 1900–1950*], Belgrade, 1973; M. Todić, *Istorija srpske fotografije (1839–1940)* [*History of Serbian Photography (1839–1940)*], Belgrade, 1992; Lj. Blagojević, *Modernism in Serbia: The Elusive Margins of Belgrade Architecture 1919–1941*, Cambridge Mass, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> S. A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe – From the Baltic to the Balkans. Ca. 1890–1939*, Cambridge, 1999; E. Clegg, *Art, Design & Architecture in Central Europe 1890–1920*, New Haven and London, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> L. Trifunović, *Slikarski pravci XX veka* [*Movements in Painting of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*]; M. Šuvaković, 'Zenitizam' ['Zenitism'] and 'Dada' in: H. V. Janson, E. F. Janson, *Istorija umetnosti* [*History of Art*], Expanded edition, Varaždin, 2005.

Irina Subotić organized the exhibition *Zenit i avangarda dvadesetih godina* [*Zenit and Avant-garde of the 1920's*] at the National Museum in Belgrade, after the ten-year long institute inheritance proceedings following the death of Ljubomir Micić, *spiritus movens* of the movement, was concluded and the material (documents, correspondence, photographs, publications, collections etc.) divided between the National Library of Serbia and the National Museum. Twenty five years later the two authors joined their decades-long diligent research in the book *Zenit, 1921–1926*, and with reprinting of the copies of the eponymous magazine and their presence and availability at the pages of world electronic library, the scientific and general public has gotten reliable sources for studying the phenomenon. One could say that the long-started endeavour of *Zenit's* historization is finally completed. Now, when the referential platform exists, it is possible to think about this example of 'male, neparadigmatske avangarde' ['small, non-paradigmatic avant-garde'] much more freely and differently, outside the narrative of History and within the various contexts of the past and the present.

The book is structured in several units. The first one consists of the introductory texts analyzing the development history of *Zenit* magazine, as the pivotal medium and space of artistic intervention, in other words as the artistic product/avant-garde artwork from the literary perspective – V. Golubović, 'Časopis *Zenit* 1921–1926' [*Zenit* Magazine 1921–1926] – and from the perspective of visual organization of Zenitist editions, publications and manifestations – I. Subotić, 'Vizuelna kultura časopisa *Zenit* i *Zenitovih* izdanja' [*Visual culture of Zenit Magazine and Zenit's Editions*]. Both chapters emphasize the early leaning onto the Expressionism, then the ambivalent relationship with Dadaism, the transition to Cubism and Futurism, and the final turning to the non-mimetic, abstract art, as well as geometric styles and various forms of Constructivism, from Purism, Neoplasticism, Bauhaus, to Constructivism, Productionism and Functionalism, both in textual (literary

and translational) and visual content, and especially in the way these two fields permeated one another. What is particularly stressed is the dynamic character of the magazine as the international forum which gathered all of those who, by the editorial board's opinion, were current, unconventional, dedicated to the concept of art-language innovation which would also enable the detailed reconstruction of the society, towards the one based on a creative and free individual. Then the chapter 'Letopis Zenita i zenitizma' ['Chronicle of *Zenit* and Zenitism'] follows, where in detailed and thorough manner are examined all the issues of the *Zenit* magazine: there were 43 of them during the five years of its existence – in the Zagreb period, 24 issues were published in the steady monthly pace, up to May 1924, while in the Belgrade period, months-long publishing stalls were tentatively compensated by merging several issues into a single volume. Besides that, the authors discuss the editorial policy and all the local and foreign pro-et-contra opinions expressed while the magazine had been published and the circle around *Zenit* had been active. The chronicle is concluded by a kind of *post scriptum*, where the time after *Zenit* is considered – '1927–1941 Postzenitizam: Pariz, Beograd' [1927–1941 Post-Zenitism: Paris, Belgrade], yet another chapter organized chronologically. After these very detailed facts, we are presented with the biographies of the *Zenit* collaborators ('Biografije saradnika Zenita' ['Biographies of *Zenit* Collaborators']), then the thorough chapters 'Bibliografija časopisa *Zenit* i Biblioteke *Zenit*' ['Bibliography of *Zenit* Magazine and *Zenit* Library'], 'Literatura o *Zenitu* i zenitizmu' ['Literature on *Zenit* and Zenitism'], and, finally, summaries in English and the comprehensive list of names.

The authors interpreted Zenitism from the historical perspective, founding their interpretation upon the positivist school of methodology, and actually regarded the value of the whole phenomenon in a modernist key, as a progressive, current, advanced, projective movement. Great space is logically devoted to Ljubomir Micić, but, proportionally to their

engagement, the equal attention was paid to Branko Ve Poljanski, Ivan Gol, and as 'paradigmatski umetnici zenitizma' ['paradigmatic artists of Zenitism'] were highlighted Mihailo S. Petrov, Josip Seissel/Jo Klek, Alexander Archipenko, Wassili Kandinsky, Vladimir Tatlin, each of them being connected to one of the development stages of the Zenitism and the magazine itself. Special attention was paid to the critical spirit and practice of Ljubomir Micić, aimed at the values and attitudes of (petty-)bourgeois Zagreb/Belgrade/Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but also to the *Zenit* collection, which, as a 'practical critic', he created mostly out of gifts. The collection was based on the examples of unconventional, explorative, transgressive artistic practice which he championed and promoted and which was accessible to the (scarce) interested parties in the editorial offices of *Zenit* both in Zagreb and Belgrade, but from which he never separated, not even in the most difficult and poor years of his life, and no part of which he ever dispossessed. It is also emphasized that the trends in contemporary culture in all his aspects, both as high and as popular, were 'material' of Zenitism, hence what is considered in that respect are the examples of advertisements published in the magazine, which helped its financing, or the reviews of new films, or the silhouette of Charlie Chaplin repeated many times over, which obviously promoted him into the symbol of the film art in general. The reasons of Micić's leaving Zagreb are mentioned - due to a politically provocative article on Stjepan Radić and Croatian culture generally - as well as the prohibition of the magazine due to publishing M. Rasinov's article 'Zenitizam kroz prizmu marksizma' ['Zenitism through the Prism of Marxism'] in the last, 43<sup>rd</sup> issue. According to the Appeals Court, the magazine threatened to spread Communist propaganda and indirectly called the citizens to change the social system by force, through a revolution. Therefore Micić fled from Belgrade and with help of T. F. Marinetti reached Paris, where he started his ten-year long exile. The controversial *Manifest srbijanstva* [*Manifesto*

*of Serbianism*], published in 1940 in the authorial literary-political magazine *Srbijanstvo* [*Serbianism*], which Micić had been editing after he returned to Belgrade in 1936, is also mentioned. However, none of these political topics received an interpretation within this book: consistently with a very systematic factual approach, they are only stated correctly and left to be a starting point for some potential problematizations and interpretations in the future.

Special quality of this book is the plentitude of reproductions, very carefully woven into the text and corresponding with its content, as well as numerous photographs whose *punctum* is helping us to reconstruct and map the trajectories of Micić, Poljanski, Anuška, the Zenitists...

This achievement will not obviate or render senseless the question of historic discontinuity, which marks Yugoslav and other East-European avant-gardes and separates them from the main narrative of the 20<sup>th</sup> century art history, but the answers will definitely be clearer. This reading, in its factual self-containedness, is indeed an 'open work' and poses a great challenge to the new fragmentary interpretations, new methodologies, interdisciplinary approaches based on social history, media theory, visual anthropology, feminism, East-European studies.

Translated by Goran Kapetanović